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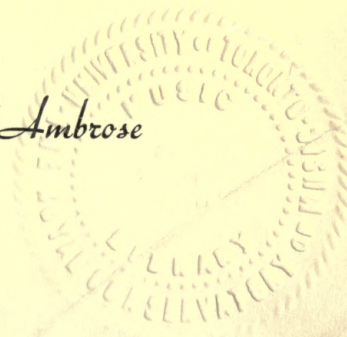
Ellen S. Ambrose

Musical Notes



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Foreword

These notes were delivered before the Duet Club at intervals during a period of some years. Those of us who had the privilege of hearing Miss Ambrose will not easily forget the charm and humour of her informal talks and will be glad of the opportunity to refresh our memories. It is not easy to condense much information into a small space, but that Miss Ambrose had the gift of seizing upon the salient characteristics of her subject, and of presenting them in both an interesting and illuminating manner, will be very apparent. But it took much forethought, time and labour, all of which were given freely and ungrudgingly, and were a sample of what she expected and hoped for from the working members of the club and her pupils, in return.

It would be difficult to estimate what Miss Ambrose has done for music in Hamilton,—either through the Duet Club since its inception many years ago, or through her personal influence—but we are sure that many will welcome this tangible proof of her work for, and interest in, the subject she had so much at heart.

M. ISABEL SCOTT.

Jensen

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AL ISABEL SCOTT

Musical Notes

By ELLEN S. AMBROSE



Palestrina

SURELY nobody ever made such a lasting mark on History, and then became so unfamiliar, as the Italian composer called "the Founder of the Pure Italian School of Church Music." But our unfamiliarity, which at times amounts to ignorance, is not really unpardonable, for Palestrina came before Bach and Handel, at a time when Music was more intellectual than emotional, and when our modern Music had only begun to show itself. Our modern Music came with the advent of Oratorio and Opera. From these sprang solo-singing and the marvellous development of Instrumental Music, and our modern harmony dates from that time. Palestrina was the crowning glory of the School which immediately preceded our Modern School, and which was largely devoted to unaccompanied choral singing.

His music is considered beautiful in its own way. Parry, in his history, says, "Palestrina, without emotion, embodies the most perfect presentation of contemplative religious thought," but today, if the radio is any guide, "contemplative religious thought" is not greatly in demand. Thrills would be better, but the only thrill that Palestrina gives, comes from a style which though rather severe, is remarkably serene and noble. Then, he wrote very largely for the service in the Pope's Chapel, so altogether we need not blush too deeply for any hazy ideas we may have of him. All the same, he was a genius and a force in Music, and he was inseparably connected with a movement which students of Music are supposed to know all about.

But his story is as unfamiliar as his Music, and the attempt to make it interesting is not helped by those provoking people who refuse to credit any little personal touches, no matter how interesting, or how probable, unless they can be established beyond doubt. You know them. Those who warn us that there is no proof that Alfred the Great ever saw a pancake, or that Robert Bruce was ever near a spider. However, backed by

countless historians, I will give his story as told by them, and not worry over pinches of salt.

Palestrina, then a peasant lad of sixteen, was trudging up to Rome, singing as he entered the city. This attracted the attention of a wayside Kapellmeister, who offered the lad a musical education in Rome. This would mean not only sound teaching, but hearing the finest music of the day, and possible association with such men as Goudimel, a famous music master, or even Filippo Neri, to whom we owe the Oratorio. A pinch of salt is sometimes advised on this kind Kapellmeister, but we are allowed to believe that the boy walked to Rome, and spent several years there, was a pupil of Goudimel's, and began a life-long friendship with Filippo Neri.

I might mention here that he was not Palestrina, but it was not uncommon in those days for a man when he had made his mark, to become known by the name of his native town; and for this, I for one am thankful, for "Palestrina," either for speech or memory, is easier than "Giovanni Pierluigi," his rightful name.

On returning to his own city, he was made organist and choir leader of the Cathedral. This was considered a very honourable position, and Palestrina had to make the most of the honour, for the salary was not in keeping. In fact it was not a bad thing that the good peasant girl he now married should have inherited two vineyards, for though we are not told that the wolf ever actually entered their door, there were times when it was the wife's vineyards that kept him out.

He was fortunate also in attracting the attention of a Church dignitary, who pushed several good things in his way, and in gratitude for one of these, he wrote a Mass which he dedicated to his kind patron. This Mass is today considered a model, and the dedication led to something undreamt of, for this churchman was later elected Pope of Rome, and remembering the beauty of this music, he made Palestrina a member of the Sistine Chapel Choir. As the standard of Music in this Choir was unusually high, Palestrina was delighted, but not so all the faithful, for according to custom, these positions were open only to celibates, and Palestrina was a married man. However the Pope turned a deaf ear to all remonstrance, and whether right or wrong in disregarding tradition, he was all right in his belief that Palestrina was bound to arrive, for he did arrive, and was on the spot when the Fathers of the Church began to be seriously disturbed over a strange degeneration in the music provided for Divine worship.

This requires a dip into back history. Just a dip, for fear I get out of my depth.

Everybody knows that in early Christian days all sang the same part, what we call the "air." But the limitations of the human voice often put the air out of reach, and then these old singers did what many of us do today: they dropped down to the octave below. This would let them in, but could not give that longed-for variety that part-singing can give, and the next move-on was singing at the fourth and fifth below. This is so unpleasant to us today, that many believe that they had some way of toning down the unpleasantness, but however that may be, we are usually told that singing at the octave, the fourth and the fifth below were the first steps in part-singing.

The study of early music is usually divided into three periods—the Gregorian, the Polyphonic, and the Modern.

The Gregorian, which is one voiced, was under the tender care of the Church for a thousand years, and then gave place to the Polyphonic, which was many voiced, and the School to which Palestrina belonged, and for two hundred years this School was engaged in the fascinating employment of making several melodies, all sung at the same time, go nicely together.

The art of doing this is called "Counterpoint," and the numerous Contrapuntal Schools, especially that famous School of the Netherlands, did some fine and lasting work, but after a time, they seem to have lost their heads. Many were obsessed with the attempt to crowd an unheard of number of melodies into one composition; others had begun, even in a Mass, to allow the tenor, who had then the leading voice, to sing some popular song in the vulgar tongue, while the rest of the choir sang the proper religious texts in Latin. And the music of these songs was often unsuitable and the words not always proper. By Palestrina's day, things had gone from bad to worse.

The secular songs were scandalizing many, and Cardinal Branciano declared that when hearing some of the Netherland works, he seemed to be "listening to a lot of pigs in a poke." A commission was formed to look into the matter and at that famous Council of Trent, it was declared (in proper Ecclesiastical terms) that these Netherlanders were the limit, and a drastic remedy was proposed—to allow no music for the Church choirs but the Gregorian Chant. This sweeping reform filled the musical camp at Rome with consternation, for it meant putting the clock back to when all sang the same part.

Polyphony had been occupying the attention of the Schools for generations, and it seemed as though their work would be

swept away. In early Christian days, instruments had been put under a ban on account of their association with gross heathen amusements, and none could forget how long it had taken the poor things to live down their evil reputation, and now on account of the perversity of some composers, part-singing was in danger of a throw back. It was allowed that the secular songs must go, and the tone of the music be raised, but there was a protest against this limiting of Church Song.

Palestrina, among others, was appealed to and begged to write a Mass that would be at once up to date and yet devotional enough to convince these worried Fathers that Reform need not mean Reaction. Palestrina sent in three Masses. One was accepted, and its success when performed was sensational. It was allowed that he had stemmed the rising tide of disapproval, and he was acclaimed as the first to write musical Science with musical Art. And again comes a request for a pinch of salt on Palestrina's exact share in this movement. But Rubinstein seems to voice the opinion of very many, when he said, speaking of the rise of musical Art (art with a capital A), "and in my estimation this began with Palestrina."

History has a trick of repeating itself, and there may be some here today who can remember when the newly elected Pope Pius X declared that the Roman Church music had become too florid, and again was heard the order to return to the Gregorian Chant. In many places, Hamilton among the number, there was disgruntlement, and in the end the Pope, though still strong on reform, somewhat modified his order. James Huneker says that Pius X was "an ultra-Gregorian" and he does seem to have done a great deal to restore this fine old music to more general use, and it is interesting to recall his effort when reading of Palestrina's earlier story.

We left Palestrina very happy in his work at the Sistine Chapel, of which he had been made Composer, an outstanding mark of appreciation, and now we might surely consider him a settled success. But that's exactly what he wasn't, for when his friend the Pope died, Paul, his successor, who was a stickler for tradition, promptly turned Palestrina out of office, putting a celibate in his place. Poor Palestrina was heartbroken. He felt that the bottom had dropped out of his hopes, musical and financial. To be sure he was given a retiring allowance, but about six dollars a month to a man with a wife and four children seemed cold comfort, and dark days followed. However, he did find another position, which, though not as good as the lost one, enabled him to do some telling work—so telling in fact, that when Paul died, Palestrina was re-instated in his former position

with new honours added to those already gained. But nothing more substantial than honours. Indeed it would be pleasing to learn that at any time his income ever bore a fair relation to his acknowledged ability, but History says it never did. However, he received what many a genius has failed to get—a widespread recognition of his work during his lifetime.

No biography would be complete without an account of a march to Rome taken when he was sixty for some Jubilee. He was accompanied by fifteen hundred other pilgrims, and other processions joined them on the way. They must have been a striking sight—choristers in gowns, cowed monks, surpliced priests, peasants in their picturesque Sunday best, and children as angels bearing olive branches, all singing as they marched, the music of the man who forty-four years before had trudged into Rome singing all by himself—a nobody. It would be interesting to know what Palestrina would have thought of an account of a recent pilgrimage to Assisi, the home of the blessed Saint Francis, where pilgrims were dashing into the city in motors, and each motor seemed equipped with at least two horns.


In middle life "Sorrow claimed Palestrina for her own." He lost his dearly loved wife and three of his four sons. All musical and carefully trained—only the worthless one left. But Palestrina's loss was the world's gain, for some of his finest work was done at this heart-breaking time. He wrote very little secular music, but Motets, Litanies, Offertories, in fact all Church Music, he just poured out.

Though not classed with our modern composers, he did give a helping hand to our Modern Harmony, for it was he who took the leading part from the tenor and gave it to the soprano, which led to more than can be mentioned here. Naturally conservative, he was fond of simple triads; was chary of the now indispensable Dominant Seventh, and of what was then called "disturbing chromatic intervals." There had been a commotion over the rise of chromaticism, which gives food for thought to those of us who shy at atonality. One of Palestrina's hymns is used every Easter Sunday in many of our churches. The one beginning "The fight is o'er, the battle won," though we today preface it with three exultant "Alleluias." In this hymn I can find not one dominant seventh, nor one passing note, and yet it is neither cold nor severe. Palestrina is held to have blazed the trail for Bach, and years after his death, Haydn tried to make his pupil Beethoven write in the so-called "Palestrina style," but fortunately for us, Beethoven would write in none but his own style.

In 1594 after a month's illness from pleurisy, Palestrina died in the arms of the saintly Filippo Neri. Crowds followed him to the funeral service at St. Peter's, where only his own music was sung, and on his tombstone was engraved "The Prince of Musicians."

Palestrina was not only a genius, he was a good man. So often when commenting on the vagaries of someone of unusual talent, we are reminded that a genius must never be judged by ordinary rules, which makes it all the nicer to be able to read of a genius, who seemed to consider the Ten Commandments just as binding on him as though he had been rather stupid. We may not know much of his music, but some idea of the man may be gathered from the preface to his last volume of Motets; here he says, "Music has such a powerful influence on mankind, that those who misuse their gifts are sinners in God's sight. From my youth up I have been terrified at the thought of giving forth anything that might lead to godlessness, and all the more now that I am old, should I place my entire thoughts on lofty earnest things such as are worthy of a Christian."

Such was Palestrina, and where in these four hundred years has any musician had, or could have a higher standard?



Haydn

Joseph Haydn, whose two hundredth birthday we celebrate today, is an illustration of the Poet's saying that "Honour and Fame from no condition rise," as his father was a waggon maker and his mother was a cook. Many people think a good cook deserves a title, and as this particular cook was, before her marriage, in the employ of a wealthy Austrian nobleman, I expect she was a good cook, though history doesn't mention it. But we are told that she was a good mother, who brought up her eleven children in the fear of God, and who had a good voice, singing with her husband in the village choir, and at fairs and other festive gatherings.

The father was passionately fond of music. He could sing all the folk songs of Austria, accompanying himself by ear on a home-made harp, so little Joseph came honestly by his musical propensities, and before he was six, he could sing all these songs accompanying himself with two sticks for beating time. A visiting relative hearing him sing, was so struck with his sweet

voice, his correct ear and his keen sense of rhythm, that he begged to be allowed to take the boy to Hamburg, where he himself taught music, and give him a good grounding. The mother didn't approve. She wanted her boy to be a priest, but his father jumped at the chance, and diplomatically pointed out the advantage of a musical education to one in Holy Orders, so off went this little fellow, not yet six years old, for the serious study of music.

And it was serious, for the teachers of that day were profoundly impressed with the efficacy of thrashings, and of goings to bed without supper. Haydn in after life said, "I got more beatings than bread," but he bore no malice, he was so grateful for the teaching. I don't know why he required beatings, for he was a born student, but he was also an exceedingly lively lad, and his pranks were often trying. However, beatings were the fashion, and possibly if they were just a little more fashionable today, we might have more Haydns.

Before he was eight, he was snapped up for the choir of St. Stephen's at Vienna. Here the choir boys lived by themselves in charge of a master. They were allowed board and lodging, an elementary education and coaching in music. The food was severely plain and none too plentiful. Like Oliver Twist, the boys often "asked for more," and like Oliver Twist, they didn't get it. And the musical education was as scrumpy as the food. But Haydn was so impressed by the music he heard, that he devoured any book he could lay hands on. Some of the boys could afford to pay for outside help, but not Haydn; he couldn't afford decent clothes. Of course proper garb was provided for Church, but outside the services, Haydn said he was "a veritable scarecrow," which must have been a trial, for he was fond of dress. All the same, when his father sent him a small sum of money to make himself more presentable, he spent it on the latest book on theory.

At sixteen, his voice broke, and his master taking a mean advantage of his having playfully cut the pigtail off a neighbouring chorister's wig, turned him into the street. He had nowhere to go; he wouldn't go home and burden his father, and for a time he tasted the bitterness of unemployment. But he had two characteristics which helped him all through life. He could always scratch around for some kind of a job, and now, though he couldn't keep the wolf from the door, he did keep it from getting in. He could play at dances, he could accompany, he could black boots, brush clothes or do up wigs, and for a time he shaved a mean old curmudgeon in return for singing lessons.

Then, though not handsome, he had a way with him, and again and again somebody, attracted by his manner and his determination to get there, lent a helping hand. Twice he was given the use of an unfurnished attic. To be sure both were cold, and one was leaky, but so long as he had a roof to cover him, and his cherished books and his rickety old piano, he was never long depressed. He was still down at heel and out at elbow, and lived from hand to mouth, but slowly and steadily his prospects brightened.

He even arrived at getting married. Why, I don't know. He really wasn't in love; he had wanted to marry the girl's sister, but she went into a convent, and seemingly he took this one to oblige her father, who had been very kind to him, and who wanted him for a son-in-law. It was a sad mistake. She was older than he, and turned out to be everything a man would want his wife not to be. She had no sympathy with his Art, and was only interested in his compositions for what they might bring in, for she was frightfully extravagant, and she suffered from long and acute attacks of crossness, at times becoming abusive.

In fact, wife beating was not uncommon in those days, and had Haydn taken a stick to Anne, it would have served her right—but he didn't, he just worked hard to keep her purse filled, and stayed away from home as much as possible. He was essentially a domestic man, and if he did spend rather too much time with sympathising ladies, one can hardly blame him. At last a formal separation was effected, Haydn providing liberally for her support.

As there had seemed no possible chance of a happy home in Vienna, Haydn had, somewhere about this time, been glad to accept the position of Conductor of Music at the palatial establishment of Prince Esterhazy, some miles out of town. He agreed to stay for three years, while the Prince could turn him out at any moment of dissatisfaction, but as Haydn stayed for twenty-seven years, it tells a tale for both men.

Haydn's position in the Castle was not much above that of an upper servant, but a Patron, in those days, was a necessity for struggling artists, and at these courts, while a famous actress or operatic star might have some social standing, a composer had little or none. It took a Beethoven to settle that. But at Esterhazy, Haydn found not only a private chapel, choir, and an opera house, but also a fair orchestra, and to be able at any hour to call up an orchestra and a trained chorus, and try things out on them, more than made up for a rather menial position. And if the Prince did keep Haydn on the jump composing for every

imaginable occasion, he was fair and generous according to his lights—which were sometimes dim.

One drawback was that Esterhazy was in the heart of the country, and as Haydn said, "I am cut off from the world and forced to become original." This was a pity, for listening, especially in music, means a lot, and Haydn had no chance of listening except on the rare occasions of a visit to Vienna. Here he came across Mozart and they became devoted friends. Mozart was twenty-five years the younger, but he was also, the more gifted, and his opportunities were greater, and Haydn learned much from Mozart.

The visitors to the palace at Esterhazy came from all over Europe, and as they were charmed with Haydn's music and conducting, Haydn became famous. Commissions came from distant places, also urgent invitations accompanied by diamond rings and gold snuff boxes. The Prince was quite pleased with these marks of appreciation, and when one of them took the rather inconvenient form of a coach and pair, he graciously allowed it a place in his luxurious stables.

He was still more pleased at Haydn's repeated refusals to leave Esterhazy, and at the Prince's death, Haydn found himself with an annuity which enabled him to gratify a longing to travel, a longing which loyalty to his chief had prevented his considering. He was now fifty-eight, and had never in his life been far from home, and when he decided to accept a long standing invitation to visit London and conduct his own works, many of his friends thought it was daring to attempt such a journey at his time of life.

Today when people rush across the ocean to pay a call, and when men of eighty are begged to take a seat in the Council of Nations, the risk Haydn proposed to run doesn't sound very alarming, but Mozart for one was greatly concerned. He was afraid he would never see his old friend again, and he never did, for it was his own days that were numbered, and it was Haydn who was left to mourn.

Haydn paid two long visits to London, and here this son of a waggon maker and a cook, hobnobbed with royalty, while the English people fully justified the claim so often made for them, that for recognition and encouragement they can't be beaten. Socially, they nearly killed Haydn with kindness, for his long and quiet life in the country had unfitted him for the whirl of London, and though he appreciated the attention, he was glad to get back to a less hectic life. But musically Haydn's stay in

England was all to the good. The Symphonies he wrote in London showed a great advance on his earlier work, and they are the ones we hear today. Our "God Save the King" made him more than willing to accede to his Emperor's request that he would give Austria a National Anthem, and he gladly wrote that fine hymn heard all over the British Empire today.

Handel's music impressed him tremendously. The "Messiah" fairly carried him away, and wakened a longing to write an Oratorio himself. In later life he did write "The Creation," which, while not equal to the "Messiah," was a great success.

The year before Haydn's death, Salieri was conducting this work in Vienna, and some of Haydn's friends took him in a wheeled chair to the concert hall, and at the end of the first part, his chair was run into the middle of the room where the enthusiastic audience gathered around cheering and kissing his hands—Beethoven among the number.

His last days were saddened by the misfortunes of his country, for Vienna was occupied by Napoleon's troops, and it does seem characteristic of this kindly-natured man, that his very last visitor should have been a French officer, who deeply touched Haydn by sitting down to the piano and singing the old composer's famous song "In Native Worth." A few days later he asked his servants to help him to the piano, where three times over he played the Austrian Hymn. Next day he died quite peacefully, and all Europe mourned, for Austria had lost a son of whom she was justly proud, and the world had lost a truly good man.

What Haydn has done for music is not easily told in a few words. It is never claimed that he was as great a man as Mozart or Beethoven, but it is a question as to whether these two gifted men would have stood where they do today had not Haydn got in his work before them.

His name is inseparably connected with Sonata, Symphony, and Orchestra. The Sonata as we know follows a pattern, and the form of the Sonata, after years of dickering, was fixed by Haydn. The Symphony is just a big Sonata for Orchestra; but the Orchestra of early days was not equal to the demands of the Symphony, and it was Haydn who enlarged it and broadened its possibilities. The Orchestra that Haydn left was not the Orchestra that Stokowski leads today; for one thing, some of the now indispensable instruments such as the clarinet and some of the brass were then in their infancy, and of little or no use.

Some of you may remember that this Club began life as "The Haydn Duet Club." In our efforts to enlighten our ignorance on many subjects, among them the Symphony, a four hand arrangement of some movement from a Haydn Symphony was given at each meeting, and it may be remembered that an appeal was then made to the Conductor of our only orchestra to let us hear a full Haydn Symphony, and he said he couldn't as some of his men would have too little to do.

But this incomplete Orchestra was the Orchestra for which Beethoven wrote his Fifth Symphony, and Beethoven could never have written his Fifth Symphony for the Orchestra that first gathered around Haydn at Esterhazy. And it was the Orchestra that led to one of the most perfect things in the world today—our modern Orchestra. In his work for the string quartet Haydn immortalized himself. Those of his friends who loved him, (and they were many) used to call him "Papa Haydn," and to the string quartet he was "Papa Haydn."

Some people find Haydn rather simple and old-fashioned; and he is simple, charmingly simple; and as he was born two hundred years ago today, he is old-fashioned, but his standing may be guessed by the tributes paid by many whom we honour. Mozart loved both the man and his music.

Beethoven who at first didn't quite hit it off with Haydn, when in later life shown a picture of Haydn's birthplace, said "How strange that so great a man should have been born in a peasant hovel."

Wagner and Haydn could hardly be called birds of a feather, and yet Wagner in his "Music of the Future" calls Haydn "that genial master who first developed the Symphony into broader dimensions, and by his wonderful variety of motives and their treatment, gave it a deeply expressive significance."

Rubinstein, who was slightly condescending, called Haydn "an old dear, to whom instrumental music owed much."

And we today may be glad that many men of old were not only born, but died, for it is in these anniversary years that many works that have been respectfully laid on the shelf are taken down, and we hear what they did in days gone by.

Haydn wrote too much. He said so himself, but we should hear more of his best, for the world today needs his sunny, wholesome, and often tender music, with no thrills, but with many surprises. When once asked what, in all his life when listening to music, had given him the most pleasure, he recalled

a service at St. Paul's, London, where four thousand children were singing, and he said, "I was more touched by that innocent and reverent music than by anything I ever heard in my life."

He was "an old dear."



Beethoven

When Mozart, 140 years ago, heard the lad Beethoven improvising, he exclaimed, "That boy is going to make a noise in the world," and the noise that boy made hasn't quieted down yet, and won't till after Saturday, which will be the hundredth anniversary of his death. I would just love to picture this man whom the world has been delighting to honour in terms used by novelists in depicting their heroes; but to tell the honest truth, had a novelist of his day been looking for a hero to figure in a romance, I am afraid he would have gone past Beethoven every time. In spite of the magnificent head and flashing eyes of our pictures, he was anything but handsome, and both his dress and his manners left much to be desired. His domestic affairs were always in a muddle, and with his erratic ways, he must have been a heartbreak to his housekeeper. But he had a charm, for even among the exclusive aristocracy of Vienna, he had friends who overlooked many things that would have kept an ordinary clever man out of their circle. Though they were the "Patrons of Music," Beethoven could contradict them as often and as rudely as he chose, and by all accounts he chose very often, and these "best people" of Vienna seem not even to mind when he used their silver candle snuffers as a toothpick. He really had two sides to his nature; one almost petty, and the other quite noble. He had a passionate love of Nature, and was never so happy as when wandering in the woods, where many of his finest inspirations came to him. He was poor, but always hotly resented anything like patronage. His patience with that worthless nephew, his adopted son, was really provoking, for he often denied himself necessities to help the boy. And then that tragic deafness which, apart from Music, made marriage something not to be considered seriously, was borne if not with patience, at least with a fierce determination not to be downed by it. And above all, his unshakable belief in a higher power that would ultimately straighten out all his tangles; these things weighed down his many weaknesses, and today, in spite of them, he stands

recognized as one of the great men of our world. And all that was best in him comes out in his music.

It would be foolish to try and tell in these short notes just what Beethoven did to gain the place he holds today. If we asked History to tell us in a few words, we would be told that "Beethoven was a link between the Classic and the Romantic Schools." But that doesn't get us anywhere unless we exactly understand what these two Schools stood for. To make this plain is a big order, and I wouldn't attempt to fill it even if there was time, but we might just bear in mind that the Classic School worked pretty much by rules. Their strong point was Design, and they worked out something following these rules; while the Romantic School wrote more freely, more just as they felt. Both had a weak side. No end of tiresome Sonatas have been written and lots of Romantic rubbish, while both Schools have done immortal work. We are told that "Order is Heaven's first law," and Music, especially Classic Music, had from its beginning striven for order. Beethoven, though nothing more disorderly than his life can be imagined, had, all the same, an orderly mind, and he brought both the Sonata and the Symphony to their highest pitch. But he was far too tempestuous to be bound by rules. It was no use telling him "such a thing wasn't done." He just did it, and then it was done; and what was worse, it stayed done. His early Sonatas and Symphonies were fairly conventional, but in his Fifth Symphony he let himself go, and got into trouble in consequence. It may seem unbelievable, but Beethoven stood to the conservative musicians of his time about where Stravinsky does with us today. Some people just laughed, some were honestly shocked, some were greatly pleased, while others were like the man you may perhaps remember, who said, "I don't like spinach, and I'm very glad I don't. Because, if I did, I might want to eat it, and I can't bear it." Well, there were then good musical people who were awfully frightened they might like Beethoven. However, Beethoven just kept straight on, and here he is today. Fate gave Beethoven many a knock, but she was good to him in regard to the time she chose for his entrance into this world.

It was at a turning point both in Music and in the march of progress. It was the age of Revolution, and the dawn of Democracy, and Beethoven was nothing if not a Revolutionary and a Democrat. Like Haydn, he was of peasant birth, but while both Haydn and Mozart had to stand kicks and cuffs, I would like to see the man who would have kicked Beethoven; and his independence came out strong in his music. He arrived when composers were making such unusual demands on both the piano

and the orchestral instruments that they had to be improved to meet these demands, and as a result, succeeding composers felt able to express themselves even more freely; and all this was to the good for Beethoven. He first won recognition as a pianist, and he might have been a piano virtuoso, had he turned his attention to technique, but thank goodness he didn't. His strong pull was towards Instrumental Music, and what he did for it can only be learnt by study; though I might mention that three instruments of our Symphony Orchestra have reason to rise up and call him blessed, the Kettledrum, the Trombone and the Bass Bassoon. The Drum had, before him, been used to beat time and make a bigger noise, but Beethoven raised it almost to the dignity of a solo instrument. In the Scherzo of the Fifth Symphony there are fifteen bars where the drum is almost alone, sounding one note all through and giving the effect of a soulful throb. Then for this same symphony he found both the brass and the woodwind insufficient, so he invited in two other instruments which had never before been allowed to show their faces in a performance of this class. The trombone had been used mainly in military music, and the bass bassoon was looked on as a clownish instrument, but ever since their promotion by Beethoven, they have formed part of the charmed circle of the Symphonic Orchestra.

One of the purposes of the Centennial Committee has been to call more general attention to his songs, which they think have been neglected. Beethoven had not Schubert's gift of writing for the voice, although "Adelaide" has been sung on every concert platform, and his songs alone would not have placed him where he stands today. It has not been easy to find suitable vocal music for this programme and it was a happy thought of Mrs. Hamilton to give us that bright Minuet arranged as a Chorus. Beethoven was a very pure-minded man, and he would never set any questionable words to music, so he is sometimes called "old fashioned," and he was also, in spite of his many odd ways, a deeply religious man. Everybody knows that at one time when life seemed too dreadfully hopeless, it was only the voice of God that prevented his committing suicide, and our two songs today reflect this religious side of his character.

Our second number is a Sonata, and a Sonata as we know does not come under the head of Popular Music. And yet, in its infancy, it was most popular. It took shape 150 years before Beethoven laid his master hand on it, and its germ was just two or three short dances. These dances were all in the same key, but varied in style; grave and gay—fast and slow. They were played on the Clavier which is the forerunner of our Piano, and

for a time they were all the rage. Then for over 100 years composers worked at the evolution of these little dances, and by Beethoven's day, each dance or subject had one or two companion subjects, and these subjects, to prevent monotony in repetition, were made to modulate into different keys and sing in different rhythms; and they had connecting passages which were given as much care as the subjects, and fine Episodes and Interludes, all growing out of those first little dances. Beethoven widened the scope of the first Movement, and gave the Slow Movement a dignity and pathos never known before. After the Slow Movement a dance had been felt to be a relief, and the graceful Minuet was first chosen, but the time as danced was found to be too slow, and Beethoven quickened it up till it came to be the Scherzo, which is the epitome of joy. To follow the working out of a Sonata is both a musical and an intellectual pleasure. Mozart said of his that he wrote "for long ears," and a Sonata won't unfold itself to any other. And in Music we know that ears get longer the more they are used. This Sonata, (Opus 10, No. 3) though it shows signs of the irrepressible Beethoven, belongs to his first period and is not really hard to grasp. These notes on the Sonata apply to the Concerto, which is simply something larger in style, more difficult, and accompanied by Orchestra. Beethoven's Third Concerto is held to be "an artistic triumph; one of the most perfect works of musical art," and it was his first real "kick over the traces." As, like the Sonata, a Concerto is a built up composition, the design can't possibly be learnt from just one Movement, but "half a loaf is better than no bread."

And exactly the same may be said of his priceless Trios. As this little company of piano and strings is to be a permanent organization, the Club may look forward to a better acquaintance with these renowned compositions. To read, or tell of Beethoven's life may be saddening, but to study his music is uplifting.



Schubert

If Schubert didn't leave as broad nor as deep a mark as Beethoven, it is quite plain from what our President has told us that he was Somebody, and that 131 years ago yesterday, he arrived to open a new chapter in the history of Song. And yet, he is so often spoken of as "poor Schubert." As far as this world's goods goes, he was certainly poor, and he was also plain and awkward, and lacking in dignity. It's true that Beethoven

was just as uncouth as Schubert, but Beethoven went about with a sort of a "you be hanged" air, which stood him in good stead, while poor shy Schubert suffered from what is today called "an inferiority complex." He would cry out "Who can do anything after Beethoven!" Well, Schubert could, and Schubert did, for, great as Beethoven was, his songs have not taken up as much room in the world as Schubert's.

Schubert's early life is, I think, known to everybody. That choir school, where the little fellow, half starved and half frozen, went about picking up stray scraps of paper on which to write music, too poor to buy even a longed for apple, much less manuscript paper. And that better-off schoolmate who came to his help, and by supplying the paper, enabled the boy to give way to his ever irrepressible yearning to pour out his soul in music.

Well, his short life from beginning to end was very much the same story.

He is called "poor Schubert" because although with his songs he blazed the trail for Schumann, Brahms, Franz and Grieg, he had to pay the price that Fate demands of those who pioneer. For ages before him, the Folk Song and the Ballad had satisfied the music world. The melody in these was short and unvaried, and the accompaniment just a simple support for the voice. The poems were sometimes quite long, with changes of sentiment from grave to gay, and then the singer would just have to manage to convey these changes by taking liberties with the time or the tone or the accents. Then in opera which came later, the words didn't count for much, the singers being too often intent on showing what wonderful things they could do with their voices.

But by Schubert's day Poetry had made a great advance. The pretty love songs and pastoral lyrics had made way for the romantic poems of Goethe, Heine and others. Schubert was passionately fond of poetry; a fine dramatic poem fairly electrified him, and filled him with a longing to set it to music, but he could never have set such poems as the Erl King or the Doppelgänger, or any other poem of that description, and kept his music within the narrow limits of the Folk Song; nor could he have shown that disregard of the words that so many operatic writers have done. He had an almost uncanny perception of the suitable setting for a poem. He read the "Erl King" one afternoon, and was wildly excited, and that same evening his setting of this song was sung to a group of friends, exactly as we have it today, wonderful accompaniment and all. He is called "the greatest master of expression" the world has known.

Schumann declared that Schubert could set an advertisement to music, but if he had, it wouldn't have amounted to much, for when he chose a commonplace poem which he sometimes did, the setting never rose to a high level. To get what he felt to be a suitable setting for a dramatic poem, Schubert made unusual demands on harmony, rhythm and colour, but here again he was ahead of his time. His songs called for a new school of singing, and some of his harmonies were found startling. In the "Erl King," that passage where the child screams as the Erl King seizes him, made even his admirers shake their heads. And then his charming accompaniments, which created a mood in the listener, also created a doubt as to how many would be able to play them. The publishers to whom he submitted his manuscripts had no doubt at all, and flatly refused them, and for years Schubert remained "unhonoured and unsung."

But he had a really beautiful disposition, modest, kind, and singularly free from envy or jealousy, and his few friends were very fond of him. After a time, a group of these young men published "The Erl King" at their own expense, and one of them, a favourite singer, sang it so persistently that at last the Viennese began to have a suspicion that somebody quite out of the way was in their very own town. This was the beginning of Schubert's very moderate success. When full recognition did come, it was, as so often, too late, for at the age of thirty-one, worn out with poverty, sickness and neglect, Schubert had been more than ready to die.

Not half of his enormous output of work brought him in any money at all, but he need not have been so often down and out, had he not been hopelessly unmethodical and unbusinesslike. His songs, when once written, were just left lying around anywhere. Some were lost outright, some were used by the housemaid to light the fire, while others, for years after his death, kept turning up in unexpected holes and corners. As to business, he was just a child. One day, a friend rushed in to ask him to join a walking party. After music, there was nothing he enjoyed more, but he couldn't scrape together even the small amount required. However, as his friend was leaving, Schubert rushed after him with a bundle of manuscripts, begging him to see if they would help him out. The friend managed to secure the exact amount, so they had their walk, while the publisher, who took the songs, realized enough on one of them to have kept Schubert for many a day.

He is sometimes criticized for frequenting beer gardens, and for not being too particular as to his boon companions. A dear,

sociable old body I once knew, used to say, "I like folks," and from all accounts, Schubert liked "folks," and as, between his shyness and his gaucherie, he was not usually found in select circles, he had often to seek his "folks" in the beer gardens, where it must be owned, he spent many happy hours. He may at times have taken more beer than was wise for health, but, as is pointed out, he got through in his short life an almost incredible amount of work, writing so many songs that he was known to listen to some that he had forgotten were his; and he could never have accomplished so much had he been in the habit of fuddling his brains with beer. And we can't forget that the setting of "Hark, hark the lark" was written in a beer garden, dashed down on the back of a bill of fare.

Another criticism, and one that has more weight, is that in his instrumental music, "he never knew when to stop." He wrote ten symphonies and we are only familiar with two. He wrote some lovely music for strings, and a great deal for the piano, but this tendency to diffuseness has hindered their popularity. The smaller works for piano, the *Impromptus*, the *Marches* and the *Moments Musicaux* are held to be strongly influenced by the *Lied* or *Song*, and these once had quite a run. Mendelssohn, Schumann and Chopin are said to have drawn inspiration from Schubert's instrumental work, but the fact remains that we don't hear his instrumental work as we do his songs.

If we wanted to find a sharp contrast to Schubert's story, we could hardly do better than to take the life of Mendelssohn. Both composers were infant prodigies, both fulfilled the promise of their childhood, and both died young. But, while Mendelssohn was rich, handsome, charming, liberally educated and widely appreciated, Schubert was poor, plain, lacking in social graces, imperfectly educated and sadly neglected. And yet we are often told that musically speaking, it would have been a good thing for Mendelssohn had he had more of Schubert's hard luck, for trouble has always seemed necessary for the perfect rounding out of an artist. Schubert, speaking of his own works, said "The public's favourites are those that are the product of sorrow or pain."

Schubert's death was hastened, if not caused by neglect, and one can't help wondering how far it might have comforted him, could he have known that in his own town, one hundred years from then, wreaths would be placed on the handsome monuments erected in his honour, that unusual tributes would be paid to his memory, and that his music would be heard in all parts of the music world. We, today, are sometimes reproached with neglect.

"They" say that while we are helping many a third and fourth rate composer to amass fortunes by songs which soon bore us stiff, we are neglecting to find out for ourselves why Schubert is considered the greatest master of expression.



Brahms

The year 1933 marks the centenary of Johannes Brahms' birth, and on radio, gramophone and concert platform, his music has been served up with unusual liberality, and his life has been the subject of many talks. And in these talks, we often hear a regret that Brahms, who stands so very high today, is not, and perhaps may never be, a really popular composer.

Well, there is an old saying that "Appetite comes with eating." Brahms, who is more intellectual than poetical, does seem to have been an acquired taste, and in early days he was distinctly unpalatable to many music lovers. Had he been consulted as to the date of his arrival in this world, I don't believe he would have chosen the year 1833, for at that time, Liszt's fetching programme music, and at a later period, Wagner's wonderful music dramas were fairly obsessing the world, while Brahms ran to what is called "absolute music;" that is, music which depends entirely on tone, with no help from story, acting or stage setting, in fact the highest form of music. But the appetite for absolute music was not strong in Brahms' early days. He was called ponderous, and either turned down, poked fun at, or harshly criticized, for the spice of the dramatic was much missed in his work.

Robert Schumann was the first to recognize his genius, and though his pen had long been at rest, he at once took it up to acclaim Brahms as a new and valuable force in music, but Schumann stood almost alone. However Brahms did appeal to three performers who were idols of the public—Clara Schumann the pianist, Joachim the violinist, and Stockhausen the tenor, and these three at some risk to their own popularity, gave him such an insistent place on their programmes, that they created a taste which, though not voracious, saved Brahms from being suppressed, as many hoped he might be. Later on, Liszt joined the Brahms group, lending valuable aid with his magnetic performances. And later still, much later, Von Bülow, who was a devoted adherent of Wagner, (in spite of the rather disturbing fact that Wagner ran away with his wife) became an untiring

exponent of Brahms' works, and it was Von Bülow who coined the well worn phrase "the three B's—Bach, Beethoven and Brahms."

One hindrance to the spread of Brahms' music was, and still is, its difficulty. His beautiful songs are none too easy to sing, and at first many called them unvocal, and his instrumental music often makes quite heavy demands not only on the performer, but also on the listener. And listening, we are told, is an art, and an art that should be cultivated. Indeed it is often rubbed in that while good performers may be scarce, good listeners are scarcer still.

Somebody, I think it was Liszt, once divided music into two classes—"Music that comes of itself to us, and music that we must go after." Brahms earned his first pennies by arranging marches and dances for a little band which played in cafés, and he never lost his love for such music, and as for folk songs, he was daft about them. They peep out even in his heavy works, and help to save him from the charge so often made, of being too devoted to the classic form. This gay music of Brahms comes of itself to us, but his symphonies, sonatas, concertos and much else of his music does require some going after. They must be listened to and followed closely. The verdict given on some popular songs that "when you have heard them once, you have heard them again," could never be said of a Brahms work, for each hearing brings new beauties. To read of Brahms' music, and to hear the reason of his seat among the gods is very interesting, but just to read without hearing his music is of no more actual value than reading of the beauty and perfume of a rose without seeing or smelling it. So today we are glad to be able to hear and judge for ourselves. Brahms was a slow worker and very painstaking. He was forty before he allowed his first symphony to be heard. His first piano concerto had a cold reception, in fact it was hissed, and it was thirty years before the second came out. It was a great success, and has been growing in favour ever since, especially in England where Brahms receives a great deal of attention.

He was unsurpassable in the Variation form, and students often declare that they are unsurpassable for their difficulty. His German Requiem, which was the outburst of his grief on the death of his mother, is sometimes called "a Protestant Mass, full of noble sorrow and dignified hope and the most glorious monument that a son ever raised to the memory of his mother." Alone among great composers he never wrote an opera, and many authorities seem to think that he showed his sense in not attempt-

ing something for which he was plainly unfitted. He was not a brilliant success as concert pianist, or orchestra conductor, and he grudged the time given to both. He loved composing. All the same he thoroughly enjoyed his work with a Ladies' Choir which he at one time trained, and at that period he wrote some fine music for women's voices—solos, duets and choruses. His "Children's Songs" were written for the Schumann kiddies.

His last year was saddened by the death of Clara Schumann. She had meant much to him, and it quite broke him up. He followed her within the year.

Brahms never married. In early days he was often hard up. He used to laugh in after years at having to write the first score of the Requiem on odds and ends of music paper, being too poor to lay in a proper supply. He used to say that he couldn't ask any woman to share his uncertain fortune. But it seems a pity that he never had a home of his own, for, though if all the stories are true, he must have had a queer side to him, he also had a domestic side. He was very fond of little children and they of him, for he loved to romp with them and give them sweeties. He liked a simple life, was quite interested in cooking, and had an uncommonly good appetite of his own. He was a good son and brother, and a loyal and most generous friend. He was not fond of what is called Society, partly due to his dislike of dress clothes. He would have been much happier in a certain old shawl to which he was devoted. Nature appealed to him, and he loved long hikes through the country.

But it has to be allowed that his manners might not always have been satisfactory. Even the friends who loved him could have wished a little more polish, while his critics often declared that "his manners were reflected in his music." Clara Schumann read him many a lecture as to the duty of cultivating a more pleasing manner, but he came of sturdy peasant stock, and it is now held that his occasional bursts of boorishness or of bearishness were the outcome of his great sincerity and his aversion to notoriety.

He certainly took a long time to arrive, but he did arrive—and here he is, and it is the hope of many that he has come to stay, for of those who at first listened because they thought they ought to hear him, a steadily increasing number now listen because they want to hear him.

"Appetite has come with eating."

Cesar Franck

César Franck's name was left out of the notes on French Day, not because he was unimportant, but because he was too important to be just lumped with the crowd. And then he was not actually a Frenchman. His mother was a German, and his father a Belgian, and he was born in Belgium, but he went to France as a boy, and later became a naturalized citizen, and he is today famous as the father of "The Young French School."

The story of César Franck would be a very sad one if he hadn't happened to have been a perfect saint. Opinions may differ about his music, but all are agreed as to his sincere piety, his unselfishness and his never failing idealism. Considering his very uneventful life, it is something of a surprise to find him famous today, but in spite of his being one of the most modest and unassuming of men, he believed that he had a message to give to the world, and that no matter how indifferent the world might be to his message, he must give it. And he did give it, and the world was most indifferent, but now that he is dead, it wants to listen.

During his lifetime, he was simply adored by a small circle of pupils and friends, but to the world at large, he was hardly known. M. Servières, a journalist of note, tells of offering a short paper on him to a Paris publisher, who after puzzling a moment, said "Oh, I remember César Franck perfectly, he was a little man, always in a hurry, and always dressed in black, and who always wore his trousers too short." And that really seems to have been about the strongest impression he made on only too many of his contemporaries.

I can't tell you why he always wore his trousers too short, but it was no wonder he was always in a hurry. He rose at six every morning, composed till breakfast time; then rushed around giving music lessons, often eight hours a day; then home to give correspondence lessons to pupils in the Provinces; and on Sunday he had his organ and his choir. And when he had a spare moment, he gathered his favourite pupils around him at either the organ or the piano, and talked music with them, and the memory of these precious hours is still treasured by any who are alive to tell of them. His pupils ranged from young girls in boarding-schools to geniuses like Vincent D'Indy, and he was as patient and as painstaking with the dull as with the talented.

His father had been most anxious that he should be a virtuoso organist or pianist, and he could so easily have done it,

but he shrank from the very thought of concert giving, so, as fortunes are seldom made by teaching, nor yet by playing an organ, and as not many great composers have made money by their compositions, César Franck was never burdened with this world's goods. But he had something which money cannot buy, not only in his marvellous talent, but in his really beautiful disposition. Of course he felt the lack of recognition, but no amount of indifference or neglect could either embitter or discourage him. In his very last illness, with his face drawn by pain, he managed to gasp out his warm admiration of Saint Saëns' new opera, "Samson and Delilah."

His death made very little stir, but though there were only a few to follow him to his grave, those few were inspired by love and by faith to carry on his work and help found "The Young French School."

In the now numerous biographies of César Franck, he is always described as "a mystic," and a mystic, we are told, is somebody who is yearning and groping for something higher and finer than it seems possible to lay hold of in this world of ours. And we are also always told that César Franck's mysticism was strongly reflected in his music. But it is no easy thing to attempt to explain César Franck, and it would be far too much for me, even if I had been able to make a more serious study of his compositions. However, several of his biographers have made it fairly simple and quite interesting, and I will do my best to give you just an idea of a few of their ideas.

Speaking of the remarkable attraction of chords for one another, our attention is called to the two consonant chords used for the "Amen" at the close of our hymns. Anybody with any kind of an ear can tell what these chords are going to be. They are what is called "obvious" and all the old music contained a certain amount of obvious modulations and progressions, and we like the feeling of our expectations being realized, always provided that it isn't carried too far. The chord of the dominant Seventh in its usual resolution is another illustration of the "obvious." There is a story often told of Mendelssohn rushing down stairs early one morning in his night-clothes to resolve a chord of the dominant Seventh, which some facetious friend had struck and left uncompleted. The story may or may not be true, but it is interesting as showing the imperative call of one chord for another.

Whether César Franck would have run down in his "nightie" can't be told, but if he had, he would almost certainly have followed this chord of the seventh with something quite unex-

pected. He was temperamentally opposed to the obvious. And so his harmonies are often found novel, and sometimes perplexing. Then he was very fond of chromatic modulations, which, as we know, give a sense of restlessness. And his feeling for rhythm was not really strong. As one authority says, "he sings constantly, but hardly ever dances." He is also disinclined to what are called "Episodes." He packs his score rather closely with not very developed themes, and doesn't give us much chance to draw a long breath, while he does some welcome passage work. In fact, in spite of what is called his "Grand Cathedral Style," there were, and are, those who thought he laid himself open at times to a charge of vagueness and indefiniteness. And there were, and are, those who preferred the Old School with its strongly marked rhythms, its familiar modulations and its restful interludes.

But the French School of César Franck's day was largely taken up with operatic music, and that not of the best, in fact often quite trivial; and to him the style was far too stereotyped, and too easily satisfied. Then he was a deeply religious man, and he found the matter lacking in spirituality and in aspiration. In short, he could not express himself in their terms. He had to give his message in his own way, regardless of popularity.

It is too early to say just how popular he may become. Some musical people don't care for him at all, while many musical people believe that his has been the most weighty word since Bach. Perhaps, like Bach, he may never be actually popular, but even those who find fault with what they call "the unclear utterances" of many of his followers, feel bound to acknowledge that "Franck himself raised the standard of musical thought, and led his contemporaries into paths of true art," and that's pretty high praise from somewhat reluctant admirers. And the steadily increasing frequency of his name on the programmes of today means something.

It is so very hard to tell just how the same thing will impress different people. One thing only is sure; the appeal will never be the same to all. And this is true not only for music, but for everything in life. You remember the two women who were gazing at some lambs gambolling on a green meadow. One woman said, "I never see a young lamb without thinking of childlike innocence;" and the other said, "Now when I look at a young lamb, I always think of mint sauce." Well, these are the two types—two honest, sincere types, and of course there are many shades of types between, and they must all be reckoned with when it comes to anything new or unfamiliar.

César Franck wrote comparatively little for the piano, and I think not very much for the violin, and we are fortunate in our number today, as this duet for the two instruments was written in his last and best period. And we certainly have reason to be pleased with Toronto for sending one of her musical fraternity to help introduce César Franck to our Club. The coincidence of the two names is odd, as there is no connection but that of music. However as many of us have found out, that tie is often as strong as blood itself.

Our attention is called to the canon in the last movement, where the ball is thrown so often and so fetchingly from Toronto to Hamilton and back again; and "mystic" though he may be, and though he may at times seem "vague," we will find that he can also be gayly melodious, and that many of the harmonies of the New School could not be improved on by the Old School. And we will also get some idea of why Marcel Dupré, and in fact all who seriously study him say that "the more you take hold of César Franck, the more he takes hold of you."

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Italian Opera

For some time past, there has been an outcry, more or less pronounced, over the absence of Melody in many modern compositions. This brings to my mind something I saw in an English paper a few years ago. I hope I haven't mentioned it before, but I think it will bear repeating. It was a skit in the form of a short play, written by a disgruntled melody lover.

It was called "The Triumph of Discord." In this play each member of the cast was supposed to personate some effect in music. Melody was a shy but charming damsel always moving gracefully about. Then there was a crowd of Discords and Dissonances, some of them terrifying creatures, quite lawless. Also a blaring insolent company of Brass and some low vulgar wood winds always trying to be funny. An ugly gang too, of tam tams and cymbals, whose din at times was enough to waken the dead. And, in addition, a small crowd of what they called "dislocated harmonies," who should have worked pleasantly together, as they were of one group, but who didn't seem to want to have anything to do with one another.

Well, in the play when lovely Melody would come smilingly in, the discord crowd would rush at her with shrieks of "Back!

loathed Melody," and Melody would turn and fly for her life. Then the Discords would swagger around, and fill the air with an awful noise. After a bit, Melody would try again and come stealing in, but before she had got very far, she would be almost paralysed by an unexpected crash from the Percussions, and while trying to recover herself, she would be again upset by hooting and booing from the bass bassoons. And all this time she was worried by the hostile attitude of the "dislocated harmonies" to one another. I can't remember it all, but in the end, after many rebuffs, poor Melody found it was no use; there was evidently no place for her in this strange company, so she sadly took a final leave, on which the rest of the cast burst into a Finale of hideous noises, celebrating "The Triumph of Discord."

This little play was not intended for public performance, but a great many people seem to have been entertained by it, and I can't help thinking that many of us, after listening to some of the Ultra Modern compositions, would quite appreciate it. For there is no doubt about the universal longing for Melody, and while we may not think of her as being exactly ill treated, we do often feel that she is unduly suppressed. And yet, the story of our three men of today seems to point out that Melody is only a part of Music.

These three Italians, Rossini, Donizetti and Bellini were outstanding melodists, and all authorities agree as to the almost unheard-of success of their operas, for outside of opera, they didn't amount to much. Their melodies were sung, played or whistled all over Europe, and in fact, over a great part of America. You couldn't go for a quiet walk and escape them, for hurdy-gurdies were grinding them out, bands were playing them, gondoliers were singing them. In one of the Italian law-courts the judge threatened to clear the room if the back-benchers didn't stop humming the popular airs from "Tancredi," Rossini's latest success. When these operas were given abroad, crowned heads loaded down the prima donnas, and even the male singers, with jewels and money.

Before very long, all instrumentalists, and especially the pianists, were at work on these melodies, each with endless variations. This was within the memory of man, and yet today, with a few exceptions, these melodies are forgotten. I think it would be fairly safe to offer a prize to anyone in this room who could, on demand, hum an air from "The Daughter of the Regiment," or "La Somnambula." I know I couldn't, and I was brought up on these melodies.

Rossini was the earliest, and by far the cleverest and most original of these three wonderful melodists, and he did more than write beautiful arias. He brought new life into the decaying Italian Opera at a time when Opera Seria had become too serious, and Opera Buffa too broad. Endless recitatives were then the correct thing for these operas; recitatives so tiresome that the audience would often begin to gossip before their finish. Solos and ensembles were rare. Basses and Contraltos were kept back, while Sopranos and Tenors (often spoilt and unmanageable), got more than their share. The conductor sat at a piano, which was used to accompany the recitatives, and the orchestra was nearly all strings; wood-winds were just creeping in, and brass was for long thought only fit for soldiers or sportsmen. It needed courage to attack old established customs, but Rossini was nothing if not bold, and he both attacked and improved all these. But it is his remarkable gift for Melody that stands out in history, and the rate at which he composed these melodies is almost unbelievable. The famous song "Di Tanti Palpiti" was called "the rice aria," because it was written while his servant was boiling rice for his dinner. In fact, he could hardly be said to have composed any song. They just poured out; thirty-nine operas in thirty-five years.

And yet, according to history, Rossini was as lazy as he was gifted. No life of him would be complete without the story of his lying in bed, composing a duet for his latest opera. It was quite an elaborate duet, and when he had finished it, the music rolled under the bed out of his reach. He tried several times to get hold of it, and nearly fell out of bed in the attempt, but get up he wouldn't, so there seemed nothing for it but to write another duet, and as he finished this, a friend came in. Rossini begged him to fish out the one under the bed, and on comparing the two, (for they were quite different), the friend decided in favour of the first, and Rossini at once turned the second into a charming trio. He was not only indolent, but very dilatory. He never did anything today that could possibly be put off till tomorrow. He generally wrote to order, and always delayed starting a new work till the very last minute. We have his own word that he wrote "The Barber of Seville," the opera which made him famous, and which keeps him famous, in the last thirteen days of the time allotted, and during these thirteen days, he never once got shaved. This was evidently no improvement to his personal appearance, and when a friend twitted him with this, Rossini said, "Well, you see if I'd got shaved, I'd have had to go out, and if I'd gone out, I never would have come back in time!"

He was very philosophic, not easily excited by success or depressed by failure, and he could, on occasions, be rather impudent as many devil-may-care people often are. When one of those temperamental Italian audiences wished to punish him for something he had done or left undone, they hissed him when he took his place at the conductor's stand; but Rossini, instead of shrivelling up shrugged his shoulders, and turning round, applauded vigorously. Another time, an unfriendly impresario forced him to accept an impossible libretto. Rossini protested, but he was under contract and obliged to furnish the music, so he wrote the opera, and worked in a lot of absurdities. The performers must have been in his confidence, for the basses sang high soprano, while the sopranos sang in their boots, and at one orchestral number, the violinists, at the end of every bar, tapped the metal lamp shades with their fiddlesticks. This Rossini called "A Lampshade Obligato." After this performance, he left town for a short time, for the audience as a whole "was not amused." In fact, many who had paid well to hear an Opera Seria, were distinctly resentful, but Rossini just chuckled over getting even with the impresario, and being Rossini, was soon forgiven.

He was only thirty-seven when he astonished the world with "William Tell," and after that, for some reason that nobody has ever been able to explain, he laid down his pen as far as opera was concerned, and positively refused to write another. Some of his apologists said "Oh well, he was now on Easy Street, financially, and not obliged to compose," while others refused to accept this excuse and retorted, "A windmill might as well say that it is not obliged to turn. We know that when the wind blows the mill must turn, and when it ceases to turn, we know that the wind has gone down." However, though Rossini wrote no more operas, the wind still blew, though not so furiously as before. Still, his *Mass*, and his "Stabat Mater" written years after this, were hailed as masterpieces in spite of criticism as to their operatic flavour. Twenty famous vocalists attended Rossini's funeral, and the musical feature was the duet from the "Stabat Mater," sung by Adeline Patti and the wonderful contralto, Albioni.

Rossini was both kind and helpful to two young men who came after him, Donizetti and Bellini, though I shouldn't say "came after him," for he outlived them both. Donizetti was the greater student of these two, and had what is termed "a fatal facility," and the rate at which he composed his sixty-five operas proved too great a strain. Like poor Schumann and Hugo Wolf, he died in an asylum at the age of fifty. Bellini was not only a most popular composer, but also a Society favourite, and

burning the candle at both ends with delicate health, he died while still a young man. These two men, though they don't rank with Rossini, created with their tuneful operas a furore almost equal to his. They were world famous. But how much of their work do we hear today?

Donizetti's Sextette from "Lucia di Lammermoor" is often heard, and anyone who can sing the "mad scene" from the same opera as Lily Pons sang it in New York a short time ago, can be sure of an ovation, but nobody can say that Donizetti is a well known composer. His very name is none too familiar. A young woman, not long ago, was asked at a dinner party how she liked Donizetti. After a little hesitation, she said, "Well, to tell the truth I'm no judge of wine," and her husband, over-hearing, said, "My dear, Donizetti is not a wine, it's a cheese." You may call this a good story, but I see no reason to doubt it.

Bellini is even more of a back number than Donizetti, though there is, every little while, an effort to revive his "Norma." Stransky, twelve years ago, with Hempel's assistance, made the attempt, and a short time ago, Rosa Ponselle charmed New York with her rendering of "Casta Diva." But this opera still hangs fire, though Lilli Lehmann declared that the role of the Druid Priestess took more out of her than that of Brünnhilde. And the mighty Richard himself said quite nice things of Bellini, who though weak in some respects, was gifted, and had his work in "Norma" been more equal, the opera would surely have been in demand today.

Rossini's "Barber of Seville" is so witty and sparkling from start to finish that it seems as though it can never die, and many of his melodies, such as "Di Tanti Palpiti," "Una Voce Poco Fa," and "Largo al Factotem" are perennials, but considering his unusual talent, he takes up comparatively little room today.

Why is it that so much of the music that once set Europe on fire, and was received in America with open arms, is now laid on the shelf? Well, the reason generally given is that these undeniably gifted men relied too much on melody, and while a fine melody is at once the rarest and one of the most charming things in the world, it is far from being the whole of Music. If composers were obliged to express themselves through tuneful compositions only, how limited they would be, and what a lot of keen enjoyment we should miss. Donizetti's and Bellini's music was lopsided, melody pulling down all else. They quite refused to recognize the claim of the orchestra to at least as much care and attention as their Arias, and so their often beautiful melodies have been

unable to save their operas from a neglect almost as complete as their early success was remarkable. Rossini, egged on by the French, redeemed himself by his Overture to "William Tell," but "William Tell" was Rossini's very last opera, and is always pointed out as his first recognition of the demands of the orchestra. And though this Overture was for a long time looked on as the very last word in orchestral music, just lately when the New York Philharmonic Orchestra played it, there was a protest against its being used on a Symphony programme, though it was allowed to be "pretty music."

One excuse made for this too exclusive devotion to melody is the pressure put on these composers by the marvellous vocalists of their day. If we can trust history, these men and women had phenomenal voices, which had no small share in the success of these operas. Some of them possessed a range that makes us stare. Rossini's wife, who was a soprano, could with one breath take a chromatic run of two octaves, while Catalani went with ease from G, 4th space in the bass to F, 4th space above the treble. She could take a skip of two octaves with certainty, and no orchestra could drown her. And as the basses and tenors were just as remarkable, we can easily believe the urge for a steady supply of melodies which gave an unusual opportunity for display, and which always brought the house down. Then, they say, at that time the world was tired out by the wars of Napoleon, and the weary nations were more than ready for what pleased and diverted without asking for any effort on their part. And the quick success of their florid arias must have been an irresistible temptation to composers who were seldom well paid, and they couldn't, or they wouldn't, or anyway they didn't take the time needed for something more solid. This wonderful outpouring of melody held the world for about sixty years, then came reaction, and the pendulum slowly but steadily swung to the other side, where it seems to be resting today. It has swung too much to the other side, some people think, for while the recognition of the all-roundness of Music is quite necessary, the thirst for melody is unquenchable, and many of us today are now parched by the lack of it.

Liszt once divided Music into two classes, "Music that comes of itself to us, and Music that obliges us to come to it." Well, we need them both. To sit up and listen is often most enjoyable, but to lean back and listen is not only pleasant and restful, but at times positively necessary. And we may surely be allowed to hope that when the craze for the unusual has abated, our music will have not only harmonic richness, but much more of the melodic charm of these early Italians.

Modern French Composers

Our subject today is "Modern French Composers," and I don't believe there is any term that calls for revision more frequently than this term "modern."

A short time ago, a little child brought me a book of Illustrated Nursery Rhymes to look over. The one she was particularly interested in, was the story of the "little woman who went to market, her eggs for to sell," and at the picture where the doggie couldn't recognize his mistress, it was evident that this little girl was puzzled. I could remember the time when the sad plight of the little woman would bring tears to the eyes of an impressionable child, but this child was plainly wondering why the doggie was barking his little head off—because, after all, the skirts of the little woman, even when "cut round about," were not an inch shorter than her own mother's, and if that bad pedlar hadn't been able to cut them evenly, why her mother's new skirt hung down more on one side than the other. In fact the little woman had just been ahead of her time. She was now modern, and so the point was lost on this modern child.

Well, something of this sort has happened again and again in music. When Debussy first knocked at our doors, most of us refused to recognize his work as music. It seemed just a queer vague noise, and I am afraid that many of us barked loudly. Today we call him a "path-breaker" and a "tone poet." We have got used to the unusual in him, and indeed, compared with the group who are now knocking and demanding admission, Debussy seems almost a Classic.

Music everywhere is broadly divided into Classic, Romantic, Modern and Late Modern, and these, especially the Moderns and the Late Moderns are hard to keep apart, as they shade into one another. In France, the Late Moderns have given voice to a lot of daring innovations—innovations which have left many music-lovers gasping. They were led by Eric Satie, who is considered the limit in audacity; and in reading any account of these Ultra Moderns, you are sure to come across six terms. These terms sound rather terrifying, but as a Study Club, we have to tackle them. They are Tonality, Bi-tonality, Poly-tonality, A-tonality, Multi-rhythm and the Dodecuple Scale.

Last season I was asked several times to pause in the Notes, and allow those in the hall to come in. Well, I am quite sure that if I were to attempt a working explanation of these terms, it would be kind to pause and allow those who wished to escape

to go out. But a working acquaintance is not called for, and a bowing acquaintance is all I can attempt to provide.

Tonality we all understand. It simply means a key, or scale system. The tonality to which we are accustomed is, roughly speaking, that a leading subject starts off in a given key, and while other subjects may be introduced, and excursions may be made into related keys, the main subject is never lost sight of, and it all ends in the original key.

Bi-tonality means two melodies running at the same time, each in a different key.

Poly-tonality means three or more melodies, running at the same time, each in a different key. As some say, it sounds rather like a circus with three rings, but we do manage that, and there are those who assure us that poly-tonality is quite simple when you get used to it.

A-tonality means no key at all. The term "atonal" is in fairly common use today, and is often applied to our own Cyril Scott.

The Dodecuple Scale used by Ultra Moderns is really our chromatic scale, and these atonal composers go off from any tone in it to any chord they fancy. Their written music bristles with accidentals, and signatures are not used at all.

Then as to Rhythm; for three hundred years we have had bar lines and measured music, but we find composers now complaining of "the tyranny of the bar line," and discarding it when they believed it hampered their utterance. And the same with time signatures; with the late moderns the time signature may be changed several times on one line. They claim it gives them greater freedom of expression.

There is naturally much difference of opinion about all this. Some just scoff, some are puzzled, and wonder what we are coming to; many are honestly shocked, and fear that these Late Moderns are trying to wipe out the past; while others again, in good faith, beg us to remember that this world will never stay put, that no Art can stand still, and that some of these "shocking innovations" were used long ago.

It is too early to tell how far this strange music is a means or an end. I think James Huneker voiced the feelings of many of us when he said, some fifteen years ago, "If such music-making is ever to become accepted, then I long for death the releaser," but very significantly added, "more shocking still would be the suspicion that I might ever come to like it."

There are no Late Moderns on our programme today. It is generally held that their compositions need not only to be convincingly well given, but that each should be heard more than once before passing judgment. But some day we may be able both to give and to stand an hour of advanced music.

There is an old saying that "the darkest hour is just before dawn," and it was a dark hour in France which preceded the dawn of the School to which the men on our programme belong. This awakening came after the Franco-Prussian War, when France was in one of her frivolous moods, and when instrumental music and choral singing were at a low ebb. Every country which has done anything for the development of music has had its Old School and its New School, and there's always friction, the New School considering itself a distinct improvement on the Old School, and the Old School believing that it has said the last word. Then, in time, we find the New School becoming an Old School, and all starting over again.

Today, we are to hear some of the music of a school now called modern, but which, fifty years ago was offensively new, especially to those who were content with opera and ballet, and who were not concerned about the raising of the standard of music in France.

The men on our programme were all influenced by César Franck, though not all of one mind as to the exact way of developing his ideals; a good thing for music. Vincent D'Indy, the man who wrote our chorus, was the foremost of Franck's disciples. He hadn't the charm of the saintly Franck, but he did wonders in the way of bringing back depth and sincerity to French music. Though an ardent Frenchman, he insisted, in his famous school, that all good music, of whatever age or country, should not only be studied but given a place on their programmes. Indeed, his main cry seems to have been "back to the Classics," and "back to the Gregorian Chant," for on them he held that all future music should rest. He was a born teacher; in fact he looked on teaching as a moral duty. According to his gospel, everybody, everywhere, should be teaching somebody something, and as this means that everybody, everywhere, should be learning something, I think he might stand as the Patron Saint of our Club.

Rhené-Baton and Chausson were not as big men as D'Indy, but they backed him loyally. Rhené-Baton was for ten years the conductor of the famous Lamoureux concerts, which in their inception, were educational, and he is now conductor of the Padeloup concerts revived since the War.

Ernest Chausson, whose promising career was cut short by a fall from his bicycle, is well known through his songs. Xavier Leroux was one of Massenet's outstanding pupils and is rather renowned for "letting himself go."

Debussy and Ravel were leading impressionists. The barking at their early music has subsided, and the occasional growl gets fainter and fainter. The weird charm of Debussy's music let him in long ago, and his influence has been far reaching. Ravel, who is twelve years younger, was four times refused the Prix de Rome at the Paris Conservatoire; but the fourth time, coming after his String Quartette had made him famous, raised such a storm that the Director resigned. He is by birth a Basque, which means that he had a narrow escape from being a Spaniard. He is not as dreamy as Debussy, but like him, he is a very independent thinker, and again like him, owes much to the Modern Russians, especially Moussorgsky, and to the seventeenth century Frenchman, Couperin. We will all remember Ravel's "Jeux d'eau" played by Horowitz last year.

Our men differed a good deal as to late modernism. Vincent D'Indy, Chausson and Rhené-Baton were temperamentally opposed to much of their goings on, but Debussy and Ravel were keenly interested, and hoped for much from Eric Satie. They couldn't agree with Saint Saëns, who took fright, and declared that music "could go no further without relapsing into primitive barbarity." Debussy and Ravel set no limit to the look-out, but while not altogether discouraging, they do strongly deplore undue haste and neglect of the past.

As to the future, one thing only seems certain. A fair amount (let us hope not too much), of what we are going to hear will not be what we are accustomed to hear. Just how we shall like it, time alone can tell.



"Ultra Modern"

In the programmes of today, "Ultra Modern" music takes up quite a bit of room. And some of us don't like it. But in spite of our marked disapproval, it seems to have come to stay, and what are we going to do about it? Well, the opinion of the open-minded on both sides seems to be this—hear this much discussed music; listen, not just casually, but often enough to get some idea of what it is all about.

Iturbi, the pianist, while he deplores any neglect of the old, strongly advises our listening to the new. He says, "I have learned most of what I know from listening," and while he is inclined to think that many of the present Modernists have lost their way, and don't know just where they are, he is interested in both their attempts and the possibilities.

Heifetz, the violinist, thinks that much modern music is less pure than that of earlier composers; more concerned with expressing an idea than a feeling; and that in the attempt to express an idea, they often become freakish. But he too listens, and admires Stravinsky, whom he calls "the great modernist," though to many Stravinsky stands for the great freak.

Stokowski, with his famous orchestra, has often insisted on people listening to music they didn't care to hear. Some of these performances, as reported in the papers, sound staggering, and when disapproval was shown by hissing, Stokowski advised those who didn't like it to stay away, while the more pacific Gabrilowitsch suggested different nights for the old and the new. But Ernest Newman, England's foremost critic, doesn't believe that the sheep and the goats would ever consent to be herded like that, and he thinks, too, that the vast majority who are interested in music want to hear both sides. As for the hissing, he doesn't see why people aren't as much entitled to show their disapproval by hissing, as they are to show their liking by applause; so long as both are withheld till the finish.

And we are often told that it is not the old against the new—it is what we like against what we don't like, and that likings and dislikings have never followed the laws of the Medes and Persians, but have always been subject to change. So let us listen, painful though it may be—at times.

Of course we would be eternally grateful if somebody would tell us in plain terms just what Ultra Modern music is, and stands for. We can find much explanatory literature, but after reading it, we are often left with a longing for somebody to explain the explanations, for conflicting opinions often leave one befogged on account of the terms in which they are expressed.

A short time ago, Stokowski produced for the first time in America, a German opera, "Wozzeck." "Musical America" called this "an Atonal Opera," and said "it could not have been done until music had freed itself from the shackles of Romanticism," and Lawrence Gilman, a critic of standing, pronounced "Wozzeck" the most striking event in the history of opera since "Pelleas and Melisande," "a work of power and of genius." This

sounded interesting, but I have to confess that I found Gilman's further account of it somewhat bewildering.

In this atonal opera, the composer has used many old-time forms, such as the Gavotte, Sarabande and others used in the Suite, along with very ultra modern work, and this is Gilman's explanation of it all: "Through the bars of this elaborately formal structure issues a projective and piercing music, music steeped in the pity, the horror, the grotesquerie, the fantastic pathos and hideousness of the play. Wozzeck, his sun blacked out, his moon demolished, his heaven cracked and empty; Marie, anguished and fearful; these haunting protagonists are set before us with a veraciousness enhanced by the formalism that shapes the music's compassionate and bitter irony." However, the music of this opera which Gilman says "is full of mingled pity and savagery," was given over the radio, and two very open-minded members of our Club listened in, and their opinion was expressed in clearer simpler terms. After making due allowance for a radio reproduction, they agreed that such music could only come from either pandemonium or a lunatic asylum.

And at this very time, Sir Hamilton Harty, the leader of the Hallé orchestra, told the Associated Organists of England in equally explicit language, that this modern music "made of the cult of ugliness and discord, has put an end to the great line of classical composers," and he further asserted that "the present type of music is the result of a peculiar mental disease which makes every modern afraid of being left behind."

On the other hand, Mendel, whose name stands for something, doesn't hold with any sweeping summings-up. He says "we are living in an age of small men who are making experiments in colour, instrumentation and harmony." He allows that many modern compositions will have no value in the future, but that the great man who is sure to arrive will put things right. And he also voices the opinion of many that "none who value the cause of true progress, would willingly call a halt."

Prokofieff, (a modern) says, "the public is always ten years behind," and as to the outcome, he thinks that "no man alive today can form more than a hazy notion." These are just a few samples of current opinion on this bewildering subject.

As far as I can understand the theory of these advanced musicians, it is just this—music, on the old lines, is worked out, splendidly worked out, but music itself is not worked out and never will be. And whether we like it or not, change is the order of life, and history shows that an outcry has always followed a

change. When notes of a different pitch were first sounded together, when the C major scale was introduced, when the now indispensable Dominant Seventh was first used, or when composers began to show a fondness for chromatic intervals, there was the same outcry that there is today over "Atonality" and "Polytonality," for it is largely on these two that the present changes hang.

Atonality, as we know, means go-as-you-please in the matter of harmony and polytonality means several subjects, each in a different key, sounding together. Along with these go rather upsetting and certainly unexpected changes in time and rhythm. These are, to many listeners, the main characteristics of this new music, but to the adherents, Ultra Modernism means an honest effort to open up new and rich veins, lead where they may.

All this may sound as though I liked this new music. Candidly I do not, but there do seem to be two sides to this burning question. I am also impressed by the fact that so many of this advanced School assure us that it is not necessary to be off with the old love before we are on with the new—in fact that we mustn't forget that it is the old love that has opened the way for the new. Ugly and Beautiful are not fixed terms, and "Ugliness" often means that the ear is not prepared. And remembering the early days of Wagner, of Brahms, of Debussy, of César Franck, or even of Beethoven, we can't deny the magic effect of familiarity—so, let us listen, for it is quite possible that the new music has not yet arrived.

And anyone who will consent to let us hear some quite modern composition is really entitled to our gratitude, for wonder, dislike, or even toleration is not what a performer finds inspiring, and unless Gabrilowitsch's idea of an Ultra Modern audience is carried out, that of separating the sheep from the goats, and having different nights for the old and new, then these are the feelings too often evoked. But we must hear, and we must listen, if we are to learn anything of how the world is moving.

And we do not want to be like the dear old man who said some years ago, "I have lived to see the post chaise make way for the steam engine, but I cannot, and I will not, accept the automobile."



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